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AMERICAN PRINCIPLES.

A

REVIEW

By J. D. Davis.

OF

WORKS OF FISHER AMES,

COMPILED BY

A NUMBER OF HIS FRIENDS.

FIRST PUBLISHED IN THE BOSTON PATRIOT.

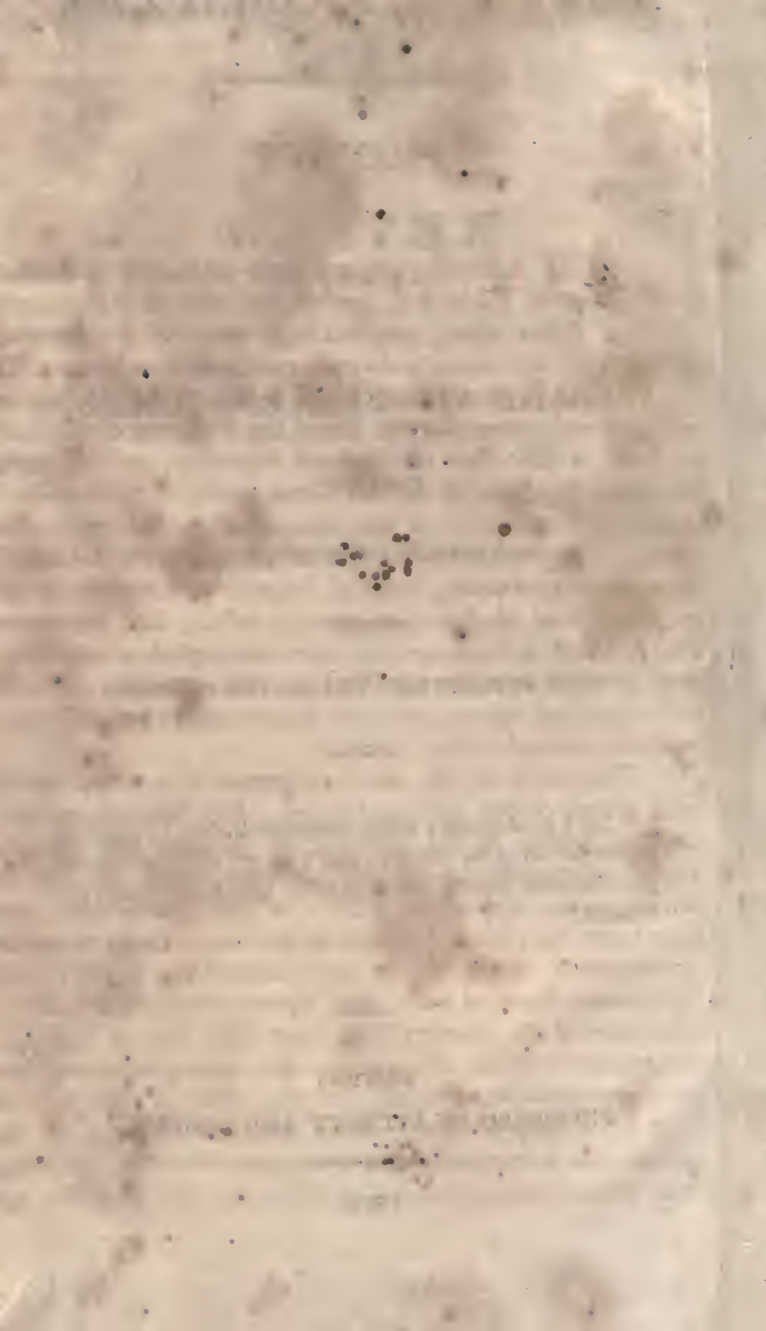
“ For I think it every man’s indispensible duty to do all the
“ service he can to his country ; and I see not what difference he
“ puts between himself and his cattle, who lives without that
“ thought.”

LOCKE.

BOSTON :

PUBLISHED BY EVERETT AND MUNROE.

1809.



PREFACE.

THE following papers were originally published in the BOSTON PATRIOT, under the title of "*Review of works of Fisher Ames, compiled by a number of his friends.*" This review was meant to be rather political than literary. Of the style and composition of his writings little is said—it was deemed unnecessary to divert the attention of the reader from a discussion of the most important principles, to the mere structure of discourse and verbal criticism—and, in regard to the style, it was unnecessary to enlarge: Mr. Ames's biographer having characterized it with the amplifying and extenuating hand of friendship, but with the discernment and elegance of genuine taste. But the moral and political doctrines, which were attempted to be ushered into circulation under the sanction of his amiable character and respected talents, were too portentous to be passed over without animadversion.

The death of Mr. Ames happened at a very momentous period of our national history. At a time when rights unquestionable at the tribunal of Justice, and essential to the independence of our country, were attacked by all the power and all the artifice of the greatest naval empire upon the globe. When in defence of those rights the government of the Union had resorted to the only possible remedy short of war; and when a formidable party in the heart of the country, had taken their side in this great controversy with the foreign aggressor, and against their own government—So obviously was the justice of this cause on OUR SIDE, that although every measure adopted by this party, was a measure of encouragement to the adversary and of annoyance to our own defenders, yet no *living man*

had yet dared to pledge his stake in society to the direct and unqualified vindication of the British pretensions. Indirectly they were indeed justified; and while Britain was heaping insolence upon injury in her treatment of this country, she was supported by these Americans as the exalted champion of liberty, the defender of oppressed nations, the last hope of the human race*. But even the addressers and reporters of the last Massachusetts Legislature, (anxious as they were to foment the spirit of subserviency to Britain, urgent as they were to unfurl the republican banners against the imperial *standard*, intrepid as they were to threaten and organize internal war, in aid of the external enemy, against our own government, struggling in defence of OUR OWN CAUSE; even they) *shrunk* from the formal justification of the British Orders of Council.

But what no *living man* could be persuaded to do, the *friends* of Mr. Ames made him perform after his death. During his life-time he had never chosen to pledge his name to those doctrines; and though he had given them too much countenance in nameless newspaper paragraphs and essays, he had manifested a steady unwillingness to avow them in the face of day. But scarcely was he cold in his grave, when his name was doomed by his friends to stand before the public, responsible for the assertion, that on the most momentous questions at issue between Britain and us, she was *right* and we were *wrong*. Nor was this the only fatal error, promulgated in the posthumous part of this volume. The unreasonable veneration of every thing connected with Britain—the excessive abhorrence of every thing connected with France—and the mixture of

* An American JUDGE had even talked of the impressment of British subjects from American merchant vessels, as being agreeable to a RIGHT claimed and exercised for ages, and had undertaken to justify the British king's proclamation of October 16, 1807, under the pretence that it was merely an assertion of the nation's RIGHT to the service of its subjects in time of war. The orders in council too had been defended, as merely retaliatory upon France, and although some straining had been manifested at the name of *tribute*, yet it was found that the same thing might be swallowed with perfect ease under the name of a *transit duty*.

scorn and contempt for his own country, which in his last days were at the basis of all his political opinions, were principles from which the most mischievous deductions naturally flowed. The aversion to Republics and Republican institutions—the bitter invective against our popular elections—the humiliating dogma that our liberties depended upon nothing but the British navy; the terror, that his children would be taken for Bonaparte's conscription to St. Domingo, were calculated as far as they could operate to spread a contagion of false opinions upon objects of the highest moment to the people of this country. And the danger of these false opinions was aggravated in proportion to the reverence for the talents and the respect for the personal character of the author, so general throughout the community. The natural and indissoluble connection between these opinions, and the public *measures* of those who dare not avow them, was material to be shewn; and the rancorous prejudices against our fellow citizens in other parts of the Union, the contracted basis of exclusive love, upon which political attachment was asserted to rest, the crude and undigested notions of patriotism, with the long argument to prove that it cannot exist in this country, nor in *any Republic*, were so many potions of poison for the public mind, which the writer of these papers sincerely thinks, loudly called for an antidote, before they should have time to circulate with all their venom, in the veins and arteries of the body politic.

To defend the insulted reputation of our country, to vindicate from false aspersions the character of the nation, and its Republican institutions, to refute the groundless charges against our children and our brethren of the Western and Southern States, to assert the real foundation upon which our Independence must stand, to maintain its RIGHTS against the Russian principles of the British cabinet, and to guard the sense and spirit of the people against the mistakes of fancy usurping upon the province of judgment, in the estimates of political morality—such were the motives which dictated these papers.

To hold up to public view the errors of an ingenious and amiable man, so recently deceased, was a task, painful to the feelings of the writer, and which nothing but the importance of the errors, and the danger of the impressions they were producing upon the public mind, could justify. The most exceptionable principles, and the most important mistakes in point of fact, are quoted word for word from the volume itself. In no one instance however has a quotation been made, which in its connection with the other parts of the discourse would bear a different aspect, from that which it bears in the selection. For these wanderings of intellect, it is abundantly manifest upon the face of the volume, that Mr. Ames never meant to be responsible to the public. They were intended for his select and exclusive friends. They furnished food for that modest and generous opinion which they delight to entertain; that all the virtue, and all the talents, as well as all the wealth of the American continent, is a monopoly of their own; and that the rest of the people are a mere herd of Sodom, to be saved from the fire of Heaven only by *their* transcendent merits. So long as these maggots only crawled within the pale of the church, their mischief was confined to the annoyance of occasional visitors at the altar of the idol; but when thus ushered abroad, they might have taken wing and spread a plague of locusts over the land.

It was then, an examination of the political system of these self-styled saviours of Sodom, which was proposed by the writer of the following papers. Their doctrines had never been so fully and explicitly avowed, by any man who had a character to pledge. Like the priests of Egypt, they had a revelation for the multitude, and a secret for the initiated. In its plenitude of perfection, their creed was no where to be found in a tangible shape. To make way for this mass of illumination, the real wisdom and virtue of Mr. Ames's best days, his public labours as a statesman, at the organization of the federal government, his speeches openly made in the face of the country, the

great and solid foundation of his honourable fame, were excluded from the compilation. Had the same principles been scrutinized as appearing in newspaper paragraphs and anonymous pamphlets, the moment they were brought to the test they would have been universally disavowed. For the holders of these tenets, like the Dutch traders of Japan, whenever traffic is to be obtained by denial of their Lord, will trample upon his cross to disprove their religion. They have given at length their confession of political faith to the world, and it was only under the sanction of Mr. Ames's name, that it could be properly canvassed.

It may perhaps be thought that the conduct of these friends is here judged with too much severity—That in publishing these opinions of Mr. Ames, they are not responsible for them as their own; and that even the errors of the volume ought to have been overlooked, in consideration of the general excellence of the author, and the valuable matter with which they are blended. The writer of the Review is not insensible to the moral obligation incumbent upon a man of generous feelings to “hide the fault he sees,” and to veil if possible, even the failings of a fellow citizen, distinguished by talents, virtues and public services. It is that obligation which he thinks the publishers of the volume have violated. As a free-born American citizen, he feels a duty to maintain the rights and liberties of his country, not less imperious than that of respecting the repose of death; especially when he perceives that a stroke is aimed at every thing which this nation ought to hold dear, under the shelter of a presumption, that the sanctuary of the grave would shield the offence from the pursuit of justice; and that a name entitled to public veneration would prove a passport for corruption to which no man living dared to pledge his own.—For it must be observed that the compilers have been as penurious of their own names, as they have been prodigal of that of their departed friend—The title page tells us that they are a number, but not who they are. The biography, a performance which in point of composition

would do honour to *any* name, yet bears not that of its author ; and the very private letters, divulged in the face of their own injunctions of secrecy, are directed to nothing but asterisks.

The writer is well aware that party spirit, will neither give him credit for his real motives in the publication of these papers, nor forbear from the imputation of others.—But it is not to party spirit, that he meant to address himself, nor to partizans that he holds himself amenable. Believing in the general sense and virtue of his countrymen, he asks of his reader that effort of the mind which Malebranche demands of every inquirer after truth—To separate from the subject every prepossession, not belonging to it, and to examine without any partial bias, the sentiments advanced in the volume and contested in these papers. If the *principles* to which the friends of Mr. Ames have seen fit to pledge his reputation are founded in eternal truth, to dispute them is nothing less than to war against Omnipotence. If they are founded in error, no apology will be necessary, for an attempt to arrest the progress of their influence at the threshold.

Should the reader be one of those, whose admiration for the genius and character of Mr. Ames, is a feeling in which he delights to indulge himself, and which he is unwilling to submit to the crucible of stubborn reason, he is requested to lay aside the pamphlet, and continue in the enjoyment of his sensations. Should he think it a more profitable course to test his principles before he carries them into action, let him examine the volume, and weigh the objections against a part of its contents, here advanced ; after which he may still enjoy his admiration of the man. This I have no inclination to disturb—Let him, if it can afford him any gratification, *suspect* the motives of the Reviewer. But let him renounce principles demonstrated to be false, and of deadly import to the independence and liberties of this country.

American Principles.

A

REVIEW

OF

WORKS OF FISHER AMES, &c.

NUMBER I.

IN that strange medley of wit and weakness ; of reason and dotage ; of benevolence and rancour ; of ardent spirit and childish terrour, which has just been published under the title of “ *Works of Fisher Ames, compiled by a number of his friends* ”—they have treated his *memory*, as they did his *body*.

For the purpose of a little brief impression upon popular sentiment, which they fancied would be produced by the authority of his name, in favour of their darling follies, they have mixed up together with some valuable performances, really worthy of republication, a multitude of old newspaper essays, which he never could have expected to survive the moment or occasion for which they were produced, and a number of private letters, certainly not intended by him for the public eye, and which nothing but the treachery of pretended friendship ever would have exposed.

Mr. Ames was a man of genius and of virtue—he meant well to his country, and served her with fidelity according to his best judgment. But at a very early period of his public life, he connected himself with Hamilton, his bank and his funding system, in a manner which warped his judgment and trammelled the freedom of his mind for the remainder of his days. The reproaches, which at that time, his political enemies cast upon him, as having contracted a *personal interest*, in the establishment of the system,

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which, partly by the influence of his exertions, was made to prevail, infused a tincture of bitterness in his subsequent political sentiments, not congenial to his natural temper—he became wedded to his doctrines, not by the sordid selfishness of avarice, to which he was always superior, but by the concern for his own fame, and by the virulence of his antagonists.*

Mr. Ames was not among the first who discerned the real character and tendencies of the French revolution—and when he did discover that it was not the introductory avenue to the millennium, he still continued to view it through a partial medium. He changed his glass, but still saw through it darkly. From that time he became on this subject a convert to the English school, and with all the opinions of the anti-revolutionist, mingled all the fear-engendered fancies of the anti-gallican. He adopted the wildest extravagancies which the ministerial pamphleteers in England disseminate among the populace, to reconcile them to the burdens of eternal war with France, and transferring to his own country the real dangers of *England*, from the prospect of a French invasion, he lived in a perpetual panic, that America would finally be only the last morsel for the voracious maw of the monster Bonaparte.

During the last ten years of his life, Mr. Ames's health was always in a precarious, and often in an alarming condition. His spirits partook of his infirmities. The most distinguishing feature in his character was the vivacity of his imagination. The disease which was undermining his constitution, without impairing the splendour of his fancy, affected the tone of his nerves. Every thing that he saw became coloured by his fears. He was continually, but ineffectually, labouring to impart his terrors to his countrymen; they grew stronger upon him in proportion as they proved inefficacious upon others, until he worked himself up into a sort of reasoning frenzy, compounded of *adoration* of British power—*abhorrence* of

* It is remarkable, that in this compilation, professedly made as an honorary tribute of friendship, but obviously guided in the selection by the fingers of faction; the Speech against Mr. Madison's motion for a discrimination in funding the public debt, between the original holders and the purchasers on speculation, though one of Mr. Ames's most eloquent effusions in Congress—IS OMITTED!

France, and *contempt* for his own countrymen. In such a state of mind, he committed sometimes to the press sentiments which will not bear the test of a cool examination—but in his private letters he indulged his morbid humours more freely ; and now, those sentiments which the hand of sincere affection ought to have covered with the thickest veil, are brought forth in all their nakedness to the world, because they happen to suit the purposes of a faction.

The following are a very few out of a great number of such sentiments. If any of Mr. Ames's *number of friends* are prepared to defend them, let them be heard. If they are such as no man living dare to defend, why were they not kept in the sacred deposit of private friendship, to which they were committed ?

“ Our country is too *big for union* ; too *sordid for patriotism* ; too *democratic for liberty*.”

Letter of the 26th Oct. 1803—p. 483.

“ Yet I see, that the multitude are told, and it is plain they are told, *because they will believe it*, that liberty will be a gainer by the purchase [of Louisiana.] They are deceived *on their weak side* ; they think the purchase a great bargain.—We are to be rich by selling lands. If the multitude were not blind before, *their sordid avarice*, thus addressed, would blind them.”

31st Oct. 1803—p. 485.

“ Louisiana excites less interest than our thanksgiving. It is an old story. I am half of Talleyrand's opinion, when he says we are phlegmatic, and without any passion except that for money-getting.

29th Nov. 1803—p. 487.

“ Suppose an attack on property, I calculate on the “sensibilities” *of our nation*. There is a sensorium. Like a negro's shins, there our patriotism would feel the kicks, and twinge with agonies that we should not be able so much as to conceive, if we only have our faces spit in.”

Same letter—p. 488.

“ It is *one of the most consuming curses of heaven—AND WE DESERVE IT*—to commit the affairs of a nation to rulers, who find in their popularity, their rapacity, or their ambition, an interest separate from the interest of the people.”

27th Nov. 1805—p. 496.

“ As great geniuses snatch the sceptre from the hands of great little rascals, the government rises, though liberty rises no more. *Ours is gone, never to return. To mitigate a tyranny is all that is left for our hopes.*”

29th Nov. 1805—Thanksgiving evening.

“ I have hoped that the *sacred shield of cowardice*, as Junius calls it, would protect our peace.—*I still hope.*”

1st. Feb. 1806.

“ A fate seems to sweep the prostrate world along, that is not to be averted by submission, nor retarded by arms. The British navy stands like Briareus, parrying the thunderbolts, but can hurl none back again ; and if Bonaparte effects his conquest of the dry land, the empire of the sea must in the end belong to him.”

14th Feb. 1806—p. 506.

“ Two obstacles, and only two, impede the establishment of universal monarchy—Russia and the British navy.”

Same letter—p. 508.

“ After her fall, ours would not cost Bonaparte a blow. *We are prostrate already, and of all men on earth the fittest to be slaves.* Even our darling avarice would not make a week's resistance to tribute, if the name were disguised ; and I much doubt whether if France were lord of the navies of Europe, we should reluct at *that*, or even at the appellation and condition of Helots.”

Same letter—p. 510.

“ They [the administration] need not fear the moral sense, or sense of honour, or any other sense *of our people*, except their nonsense, which they will take special good care to keep on their side.”

10th March, 1806—p. 518.

“ It is the nature of these [white birch stakes] to fail in two years ; and A REPUBLIC wears out its morals almost as soon as the sap of a white birch rots the wood.”

12th Jan. 1807—p. 514.

“ Of our six millions of people, there are *scarcely six hundred*, who yet look for liberty any where except on paper.”

6th Nov. 1807—p. 518.

Americans ! Federalists ! are these sentiments TRUE ? Are you that stupid—that infamous herd which you are here represented to be ?—No—Nor could it possibly be the calm and dispassionate judgment of the writer that you were.—These ideas were part of his disease—he was himself sensible that they were not fit for public inspection—his memory ought not to be charged with the detestation, which such sentiments ought to draw upon those, who, in full possession of the most moderate understanding, could deliberately entertain them.—It is not the Saint of the Calendar—but the fraudulent monks at his shrine, who attempt to pass off the pairings of his nails for relics of inestimable price.

We are sensible, that this inexpressible contempt for the whole American nation—this fanatical idolatry of Britain, and this delirious dream of Bonaparte’s coming in the shape of a tiger to eat up our children, have all become standing articles of faith in the Junto creed. I have heard it said, that when His Most Gracious Majesty was under the discipline of Dr. Willis, he fancied himself a fox, and that he was hunted by Gen. Washington. The nineteen twentieths men—the “ scarcely six hundred out of the six millions,” who are sincere in these night-mare visions, have brains less modest in their confusion than those of the great King. He humbly conceived himself turned into a cunning and cowardly beast, whose hunter was a hero. They, forsooth dream, not that they themselves, but that all their neighbours and countrymen are transformed into hares, to be hunted by a tiger ; and that in the chase, the tiger’s raven will not spare even them the salt of the earth, the heroic would-be saviours of their base and servile countrymen. It is a melancholy contem-

plation of human nature to see a mind so richly gifted, and so highly cultivated as that of Mr. Ames, soured and exasperated into the very ravings of a bedlamite.

What bitter pangs must humbled genius feel,
In their last hours to see a Swift or Steele?

But the apology that is due for him, is not equally the right of others. There are those, who, without believing a word of this absurd and inconsistent political creed, are yet as eager for its propagation as he was—verily they expect their reward. If they can frighten the whole people into a madness, like that of the royal fox—if they can fill the brains of the nation with a fancy that we have all been transformed into the vilest of the brute creation, save only the *choice spirits*, amounting to, at most, six hundred; the next step follows of course—The porcelain must rule over the earthen ware—the blind and fordid multitude must put themselves, bound hand and foot, into the custody of the lynx-eyed SERAPHIC souls of the six hundred; and then all together must go and squat for protection under the hundred hands of the British Briareus. Then, indeed, we may rely upon it, our country will be neither “*too big for union*,” nor “*too democratic for liberty*.”

To this volume is prefixed an elegant and ingenious biographical account of the author, written in a style of moderation, which we cannot but contrast with the violence and intemperance of the late papers in the volume itself. The learned biographer appears on more than one occasion embarrassed with the rantings of his subject, and cools with a feather dipt in oil the burning metal of his text. He tells us that Mr. Ames was emphatically a *republican*—but that he considered a *republic* and a *democracy* as essentially distinct and opposite. Probably this was the state of his opinions at one period of his life—but in his latter days, when the English fascinations and the French antipathies had obtained their uncontrouled ascendancy over his mind, he appears to have had as little esteem for a republican government as for the American people. It is not to a democracy, but to a *republic*, that he compares the essential rottenness of the white birch stakes, in one of the above

extracts. In short, he was too thoroughly Britonized to preserve a relish for any thing republican ; and in the paper last published before his decease, contained in this volume, he says in express terms, that “the immortal spirit of the wood-nymph liberty, dwells ONLY in the British oak.”

The proposition once made in Congress, to declare the American nation “the most enlightened people upon the globe,” has been ridiculed quite as much as it deserved. If by the term *enlightened*, were to be understood merely the degree of proficiency attained by a few individuals in the arts and sciences, we certainly can have no pretensions to a competition with most of the European nations—but if it were meant only to express the amount of mental cultivation generally possessed by the body of the people, I believe it was strictly true. It would be difficult at least to name the people in Europe, the great mass of whom possess so much of that knowledge, which is power, as the people of the United States. If, however, there was something of national vanity manifested in the sentiment, it was at least an innocent error.—But I could never perceive either the wisdom or the virtue of procuring the assuredly false doctrine, that the people of America are the basest and most degraded of the human species. It is one of those scandalous calumnies which a number of starveling vagabonds in England, with Cobbett’s Register, and Moore, the minstrel of the brothels, have been for some years administering to the malignant passions of that country ; but from the lips of an American, it is as little the voice of patriotism as of truth. The language of insult and outrage applied to the people, is no better than the language of adulation. If a tenth part of those horrible reproaches upon the whole people poured forth in the extracts I have here given, and repeated under a thousand shapes in this volume, were true, the country would not be fit for the residence of a man who had a spark of honour in his composition. He would fly from it as from a land of Yahoos—the very pretence of anxiety for the fate of *such* a country, is worse than absurd.—A man, who on the *THANKSGIVING* evening of the year 1805, could de-

liberately sit down and write that our liberty *was* gone, never to return, and that to mitigate a *tyranny* was all that was left for our hopes—a man who could believe that our country was too fordid for patriotism—that we had nothing but the sacred shield of cowardice to protect us—that we were of all men on earth the fittest to be slaves ; comes with a very ill grace, when he tells us how much he loves and respects that very country—and how his heart is bursting with anxiety for the welfare of these dregs of creation. I reverence the virtues and the genius of Mr. Ames ; but I know that in penning those billingsgate invectives against his country, he could not be in possession of a sound mind ; and I submit it to the feelings of every generous spirit, whether genuine friendship should not rather have been solicitous to shroud these infirmities from the public eye, than with such remorseless hand to drag them into day.

NUMBER II.

THERE is not perhaps in human Society, a trust of higher importance and more delicacy, than that which devolves upon the friends of an eminent literary man, relating to the disposal of the papers which he leaves behind him. This trust has so often been betrayed, that every man who has acquired a reputation in the literary world, ought himself much more studiously to dispose, before his decease, of those productions of his mind, than of his worldly estate. Men of genius are treated like kings. They who pretend to be their friends, are often nothing more than sycophants, who attach themselves to their fame, for sordid purposes of their own, and who from the moment that the superior Spirit has left its tenement of clay, instead of cherishing and protecting that fame, think of nothing but turning it to the account of some wretched passion or interest of their own—to sponge money from the purse of the public, or to pass disgraceful sentiments into circulation, for the wicked purposes of faction. The examples of *Chesterfield* and *Sterne* are familiar to those

conversant with the recent literary history of England, of men, whose reputation has been blasted after their decease, by the publication of papers, which they would have buried in eternal oblivion, but which the rapacity of *a number of their friends*, surrendered to the *indignation* of posterity for the sake of a paltry tribute levied upon the public curiosity. I know not who are the friends that published the volume now before me, but I trust it has been shewn in a former paper, that both its selection and its *omission*, were governed by motives very different from that of regard for the lasting reputation of the author.—The writer of this paper respected Mr. AMES, and laments, that others who by their particular intimacy with him, were specially charged with the guardianship of his fame, instead of adhering faithfully to that duty, have, for the poor purpose of promoting the views of a party, “*drawn his frailties from their dread abode*,” and exposed him to the imputation of doctrines, which the sound judgment of his better days would have rejected with horror, and for which they alone ought to be responsible to distant nations and to future ages.

In a former paper it was observed, that the private letters contained in this compilation were certainly not intended by their writer for the public eye ;—and that they contained sentiments which he himself was sensible were not fit for public inspection. The evidence of these assertions is contained in one of those very letters ; and in these words :

“ It is ever a misfortune for a man to differ from the political or religious creed of his countrymen. You will not fail to perceive, that I am worse than a lingerer in my faith in the conclusiveness of the reasoning of Mr. MADISON, and Co. *This however, I keep to myself and less than half a dozen friends.*” Page 507.

Is it not strange—passing strange, that with this direct, and explicit admonition staring him in the face, one of the less than half a dozen friends to whom the secret was committed, should divulge not only to the country, but to the enemies of the country those opinions, which their author was ashamed or afraid to avow when alive ?

Strange indeed it is ; but the motive is obvious enough. The subject specially alluded to in this letter, upon which it was Mr. Ames's misfortune to differ from the creed of his countrymen, and upon which he was worse than a lingerer in his faith in the conclusiveness of the reasoning of Mr. Madison and Co.—was the great question of our neutral rights to the colonial trade with the enemies of Great Britain. The date of the letter is 14th Feb. 1806—just after the time, when Mr. Madison's unanswerable vindication of the neutral cause appeared—several excellent memorials, written some of them by men who have since deserted that honorable standard and joined the banners of the enemy, were also then before Congress ; and it is to them that Mr. Ames refers, by the description of Mr. Madison, and Co.

The letter was written to a member of Congress, who, as appears from a subsequent passage in it, was *then* on the side of his country upon this great question. He has since changed his side, and the publication of this letter was doubtless intended to answer the double purpose of giving countenance to him and other apostates from the American principle, and of propagating among the people of this country, the opinion that the British doctrine on that controversy was the correct one, and that our claim had not the solid foundation of justice.

The question of our right to the colonial trade, is next to that respecting impressments, the most important of any which has ever been agitated between Great Britain and us, since the peace of our Independence. It would even take the lead of that, if the security to personal liberty were not prior in the nature and duties of government, to any possible question relating to mere property. As it affects the interest of this Union, its greatest importance is to the eastern and commercial section ; to New-England commerce and navigation, it is absolutely vital. It is by means of this trade, and of this alone, that we are provided with substitutes for those rich staples of commerce, which nature has bountifully bestowed upon the soil and climate of our southern brethren, and which she has denied to us. To abandon the right to this colonial trade, there-

fore, is to sacrifice not only one of the best rights of an independent nation, but the peculiar and most precious interests of New-England. At the time when this letter was written, Great Britain had struck a deadly blow at this unquestionable right, and this momentous interest. According to her usual custom, she had begun, without an hour's notice, to sweep the ocean clear of American property, under the assumption of a new pretended principle, and she had set her most accomplished sophists in the schools of national jurisprudence, at work, to colour her robberies with a show of argument. At that time, the cause of truth, of justice, and of America was POPULAR. The very day before this letter of Mr. Ames was dated, the *principle* of the American right had been asserted by an *unanimous* vote in the Senate of the United States. There was not a man of any character as a Statesman, in the United States, who dared to advocate the British pretensions. The very banks and insurance offices resounded with the cry of British injustice and of American independence. Even then, however, Mr. Ames and some less than half a dozen others, had been brought to imagine that they had probed this subject to the bottom, and had found that the true principle was that asserted by Britain, and that the best thing we could do, would be to *submit*. The process by which this conviction was wrought upon the mind of Mr. Ames, was an operation upon the three articles of creed, which the fanatics of his political sect had imposed upon his understanding, and which were unfolded in my last paper—the *worship of British power—execration of France—and contempt for the people of America*. His letter of the 27th November, 1805, to the same member of Congress, confined altogether to the discussion of this topic, proves that the sophistry of the British pamphleteers, had taken complete possession of his mind. The British principle was right, because the British power on the sea was irresistible. It was right because it was *necessary* to Britain fighting for her existence—It was right because France had no navy—It was right because France would not permit us to trade with her colonies in time of peace. This reasoning so exactly resembling that of Æsop's wolf, in his dis-

pute with the lamb, had actually proved too strong for Mr. Ames's dialectics. He had a considerable pecuniary interest at stake upon the issue of resistance against *that* tally of British rapine. But money, even his own money, was nothing and less than nothing in his eyes, when the necessity of Britain's agonies or the supremacy of Britain's naval dominion, came in conflict with it, in a struggle against France. His opinion of British spirit was as exalted as his idea of British logic, and from his contempt for our faculties, both of heart and head, he concluded that *we* should only bluster, but that John Bull would say he was "as little convinced as afraid," and that we should ultimately acquiesce. It did so happen, that we persevered in our claims, and that John Bull, whether convinced or afraid, did at that time abandon his pretension.

It was, however, again assumed in substance, by the far famed orders of council of 11th November, 1807. The prospect of a war with England was now rendered much more probable. As it advanced, and the dangers of our country increased, the worshippers of Britain saw a dawn of hope, that with the aid of the British doctrines, they might hurl from power the then administration, and vault into their seats themselves. They renounced all pretence to any claim of right against Great Britain, and immediately after the outrage upon the Chesapeake, formally undertook to justify in a public newspaper of this town, the act of the British admiral Berkeley, upon a pretended right of the British to take seamen from an American national ship, by force.

Mr. Ames's *number of friends* have not seen fit to indulge the public with his sentiments upon that transaction. We know not whether he had reconciled *his* soul to the belief, that every British naval Lieutenant had a *right* to search an American ship of war for men; but we confess that judging from the specimens they have given of his late sentiments upon British rights, we do not regret the loss of his opinions upon the affair of the Chesapeake.

The people were alarmed by the near prospect of a war with England.—The people were distressed by the operation of the embargo.—The people were partially de-

luded by the imposture of a pretended mission to atone for the attack on the Chesapeake. At this critical moment, one of those very Senators, who in February, 1806, had voted that the British pretension to exclude us from the colonial trade in time of war, was a violation of our rights and an encroachment upon our independence, came out in a printed pamphlet as the champion for that very British pretension. The argument of Mr. Ames's letters doubtless had converted him from the American error of his ways ; and although Mr. Ames, when writing those letters, had felt it to be the duty of "*a good citizen, to be silent while our side was argued,*" yet his friends have not thought it indecorous, at the very moment when OUR SIDE was in the most imminent jeopardy, to summon him from the silence of the grave, to bear his testimony in favour of our adversary.

Thanks to the good and wise disposer of all events, that this weapon has also fallen blunted to the ground ! Thanks to almighty God, that the nation has been saved from the disgrace and ruin, which submission to this insolent and groundless pretension of Great Britain, would have brought upon them ! The purpose of breaking down the sense and spirit of this people, to that level of degradation which would have assented to the hollow sophistry of the British claim, has been defeated.—The opinions of Mr. Ames, will not now avail, as an apology for treachery to the rights of the country.

There is indeed one point of view, in which the publication of these letters will be serviceable to the public. They have discovered, beyond all contradiction and denial, the real fundamental principles, of that political sect, which has obtained the controul of our state administration, and which for the last two years has been driving with such furious zeal to a dissolution of the Union—combined with an alliance, offensive and defensive, with Great Britain.

The last half of this volume might be denominated, the political bible of the *junto*. If there be a reflecting man in any of our sister states, not infected with the scab of this political leprosy, who has any doubt what the *junto*

principles really are, let him attentively read that part of this volume which had never before been published. Here he will find those principles which they have heretofore circulated in whispers among themselves, and denied when charged with them in public ; which in their secret conclaves they profess as articles of faith, and which in their public manifestoes they repel with indignation, as slanderous aspersions. Here he will find, spun from a degenerate plant of our own soil, that three-fold cord of *Prostration to Britain, Horror of France, and Contempt for America*, which bind together the whole political system of the faction.

But although the pretensions contended for by Great Britain, has once more been withdrawn, and will, in all probability, not now form a subject of controversy between the two nations, we have no security that in the first hour of success which the chances of war may evolve in her favour, she will not assert it again. Should the temptation of a rich and defenceless commerce, expanded over every ocean, and immediately under the fangs of her naval power, again concur with that "envious jealousy and canker'd spite," which sickens many of her most influential statesmen at the sight of American prosperity, that accommodating principle of British law of nations, which like the devils of Milton's Pandemonium, swells into a giant or shrinks into a pigmy, as its occasions require, will again make its appearance "in its own dimensions, like itself." The rule of the war of 1756, painted with some new sophistical varnish, will issue again from the dens of Doctor's Commons, as an Asiatic panther leaps from the thicket upon the unwary traveller. The commerce of America will be its victim ; and the *Canning* of the day, with some sarcastic sneer, may refer us, for the justification of British depredations, to the opinions of an American statesman. One of your own jurists, he will say, has settled the question against you. Mr. Ames has sanctioned the British doctrine.

There is another public mischief which may result from the publication of these private letters of Mr. Ames, respecting this question. There are two remarkable peculiarities in the American character : The people of this

country have a more profound respect for *Right* and *Justice*, than any other nation upon the face of the earth. They would never contend for any claim, the justice of which they should not sincerely *believe* to be on their side. They are also very much influenced in their opinions by the authority of respected *names*. These two qualities are, upon the whole, much to their honour ; although the faction, whose principles I have undertaken to expose, have made this love of Justice, for many years, the theme of their ridicule. Mr. Jefferson, who was well acquainted with this characteristic of his countrymen, often, very often appealed to this strong sense of Justice, and expressed his confidence in its operation. His reliance upon it has been one of the most copious fountains of merriment and derision, played by his antagonists upon him—a merriment and derision, in which it appears from this volume, the mind of Mr. Ames himself did not disdain to participate. The floods of sarcasm and invective which have gushed upon him, for his repeated references to the umpirage of reason, are universally known ; and this sagacious mirth might be indulged as harmless, were it not inseparably connected with a political system. If, then, the people of America could be prevailed upon to think that they have no *right* to claim a free trade with the colonies of Britain's enemies, in time of war, they would never assert it ; they would, without a struggle, surrender the trade, whenever it might suit the purposes of the British cabinet to take it from neutrals, and give it exclusively to their own people. When this book was published the two countries were on the brink of war, chiefly upon this very question ; and the intention of the publication manifestly was to stagger the faith of the nation in their *right*. Had the recent trial of our perseverance and fortitude continued much longer, the abhorrence of war would have given the flimsiest cobweb of sophistry the consistency of sound logic, in the minds of a great portion of the people of New England : especially when the British party might have rung in the ears of every trembling patriot, that Mr. Ames had declared himself against our *right* to the object in contest. I have no

doubt that if this right should again be denied by Britain, and again call for our exertions to defend it, the same party will resort to the same expedient, and that the authority of Mr. Ames's opinion will be vouched to seal the degradation of the nation, and the surrender of this great and unquestionable right.

It becomes, therefore, a duty to declare, that from Mr. Ames's discussion of this question, in these private letters, not a single scintillation of new light upon the subject has been elicited; that he pins his faith upon Sir William Scott, and the ministerial pamphleteers; that the two great pillars of his argument are *power* and *necessity*—Both these pillars Mr. Madison had broken up into atoms, utterly harmless and contemptible, in his examination of the British doctrine, and even the tali-man of Mr. Ames's eloquence is not adequate to the recomposition of their dust into solid columns. The exposition of sound principle and irrefragable proof in that work, is a substantial pledge to the nation that Mr. Madison will never abandon the right which he so clearly vindicated, and while we drop a tear of compassion upon the political weakness of Mr. Ames's declining days let us rejoice that the maintenance of our national rights against Great Britain has been committed to men of firmer minds. The honour of disclaiming the liberties of the nation, will not, I believe, soon be contested against Mr. Ames, but when the pretenders of friendship, fitted with their unhallowed hands the deadly night-shade, instead of the laurel to his lifeless brows, was there not some minister of eternal justice to interpose, and fix it with the merited dishonour upon their own?

NUMBER III.

1. "THERE is a kind of fatality in the affairs of REPUBLICS, that eludes the foresight of the wise as much as it *frustrates* the toils and sacrifices of the patriot and the hero."

"*Dangers of American Liberty,*" p. 380 of the volume.

2. "It is pretty enough to say, the republic commands, and the love of the republic dictates obedience to the heart of every citizen. This is system, but is it nature? The *republic* is a creature of fiction; it is every body in the fancy, but nobody in the *heart*. Love, to be any thing, must be *select* and *exclusive*. We may as well talk of loving geometry as the commonwealth." p. 395.

3. "It is said, that *in republics*, majorities invariably oppress minorities. Can there be any real patriotism in a state, which is thus filled with those who exercise and those who suffer tyranny? But *how much less* reason has any man to love that country, in which the voice of the majority is counterfeited, or the vicious, ignorant, and needy are the instruments, and the wise and worthy are the victims of oppression." p. 413.

4. "Is there in human affairs an occasion of profligacy, more shameless or more contagious than a general election? *Every spring* gives birth and gives wings to this *epidemic mischief*. Then begins a sort of tillage, that turns up to the sun and air the most noxious weeds in the kindliest soil; or to speak still more seriously, it is a mortal pestilence, that begins with rottenness in the marrow." p. 415.

5. "Federalism was, therefore, *manifestly founded on a mistake*, on the supposed existence of sufficient political virtue, and on the permanency and authority of the public morals." p. 416.

These strains of panegyric upon republics, and republican institutions, are extracted word for word from a dissertation upon "the Dangers of American Liberty," written by Mr. Ames, and communicated in February, 1805, to one of his friends, but never published until after his decease, in this compilation.

Its title, "The Dangers of American Liberty," is a misnomer—The whole scope of its argument is to prove the position, which on the Thanksgiving evening of the

same year he wrote in a private letter to another friend—that American liberty “*was gone ; never to return.*”

An ingenious annotator has seized upon one short paragraph, as indicating the motive for which this “gloomy picture of the affairs of our country” was delineated. He says it was to *defer*, or *mitigate* our *fate* by *alarming* the *honest* part of our citizens.

If this was really the motive, (and as the fairest in favour of the author’s intentions, to which it can be ascribed, I have the strongest inclination to believe it) the performance was ill adapted to the design—for the only possible application to be drawn from it by a rational being, would be, not *exertion* but *despair*—Every principle, every illustration, every inference leads the mind irresistibly to the conclusion, that the miseries of our condition were beyond the reach of counsel ; that the virtue and wisdom of the country were under the irretrievable dominion of its vice and folly ; and that there was nothing left among the good and great of this nation, but to shew with what a profusion of rhetorical flowers they could strew the grave of liberty, and in how many graceful varieties of attitude they could bite their chains. Its natural effect was, not *alarm*, but *convulsion*.

It was not intended by its author for publication. In the letter to the friend to whom it had been communicated, he expressly says, that “to be of value enough *for the author to own it*, he must be allowed *time*, must bestow on it more thought, search for *facts* and *principles* in pamphlets and larger works, and in short, make it entirely over again.”

I agree entirely with him, that it was not of value enough *for the author to own it* ; and think that his friends would have proved their affection for him, as well as their respect for the public, if they had shewn more deference to his opinion in this case, and less eagerness to spread abroad their favourite tenets. Whether the pamphlets or larger works, to which alone in his temper of mind he would have resorted for facts and principles, would have improved the complexion of his work, is not necessary to enquire—if the only objection against it were its want of value, I should neither complain of the editors, nor present the above ex-

tracts to the *meditations* of the public—But it contains, upon a subject deeply interesting to this country, principles at war with reason, and assertions at war with fact. Had these been merely the errors of Mr. Ames, I would have lamented in silence the indiscretion of his friends, in exposing them to the world, and suffered them to perish by the natural decays of their own absurdity—But they are not the wanderings of Mr. Ames's imagination—They are the principles of a faction, which has succeeded in obtaining the management of this commonwealth, and which aspired to the government of the Union. Defeated in this last object of their ambition, and sensible that the engines by which they have attained the mastery of the state are not sufficiently comprehensive, nor enough within their control to wield the machinery of the nation, their next resort was to dismember what they could not sway, and to form a new confederacy, to be under the glorious shelter of British protection. To prepare the public mind for changes so abhorrent to the temper and character of our people, the doctrines, with which this volume teems, were to be ushered into public view, whenever a prospect for their favourable reception might appear. Mr. Ames, in writing these papers, and others, published before his death, disclosing not quite so clearly the system of the party, was acting *under an impulse of which he was himself not aware*—But the period of his death happening just at a moment of great national difficulty and distress, the chosen hour was concluded to have arrived, when these theories might be circulated with the greatest effect ; and when disgust at our popular institutions, contempt for our own country, detestation of France, and subserviency to Britain, might be so mingled up with the influence of Mr. Ames's name, that the whole would be swallowed by the public, without examination, and all contribute to the purposes of the party. The proceedings of the state legislature during the present year have furnished ample proofs, *that these principles* have been at the root of their whole system of measures. It is also a fact perfectly well known, that many of these measures have been carried by reluctant votes ; that many members of the majority have most unwillingly assented to them ;

and on one occasion when a single spirited member presumed to have an opinion of his own, he was attacked in one of the presses of the faction, for daring to think for himself. The legislature of the succeeding year will be of the same political party as the last. They will not be checked by a chief magistrate of different opinions, and the country has been threatened with no equivocal anticipation of what will be attempted, “when the *whole* government of the state should be united in one joint effort, with other states, whose interests and objects are similar to our own.” It is therefore a sense of duty to the country, which enjoins a pointed attention to the tenets of this book, as well as to their practical effects in the administration of our affairs.

Mr. Ames (says his biographer) was emphatically a *republican*. Let his republicanism be tested by these extracts, to which a thousand others of the same cast of character might be added. The first extract declares that the affairs of republics are governed by a perverse fatality—the second, that it is impossible to love a republic—the third, that there can be no such thing as patriotism in a republic, and least of all in one like ours—the fourth, that our annual elections are a mortal pestilence, that begins with rottenness in the marrow—and the fifth, that the federalism which formed our national constitution was manifestly founded on a mistake, in supposing the existence of political virtue.

The reasoning in the second deserves particular notice—it is impossible to love the republic; because the republic is a creature of fiction; and because love, to be any thing, must be *select* and *exclusive*. Instead of the republic, let the word be *our country*—the argument is precisely the same—our country is a creature of fiction. Our country comprises the whole nation to which we belong—The love of our country, if it be any thing, can neither be select nor exclusive: it is the love of the whole community, and prompts to zeal for the welfare of all, without distinction of party or of place. The sentiment of the heart which disowns all love, but such as is select and exclusive, is neither congenial with republicanism nor with Christianity. Mr. Ames acknowledged the authority of

him whose injunction to his disciples was, "but I say unto you, LOVE YOUR ENEMIES." Was this select or exclusive? In truth, this principle of *selection* and *exclusion*, in the application of our affections to the *political* relations of society, is a pernicious error of morals as well as of politics. Mr. Ames would have found no such doctrine in Cicero's Books of Offices—And the consequences of this principle are as mischievous as its origin is contracted. It is the seminal principle from which *faction* takes its birth. It is this *select* and *exclusive* love, which breeds the whimsey, that there are scarcely six hundred out of six millions, who look for liberty any where but upon paper. It sharpens all the asperities of party spirit, and makes federalists and republicans consider one another, not as fellow-citizens having a common interest; but as two rival nations marshalled in hostile array against each other.

Had Mr. Ames, but given himself time to reflect upon his own labours, he must have perceived the fallacy of confounding that sentiment of social benevolence, which in our country is properly denominated the Love of the Republic, with that select and exclusive affection which belongs to the connections of domestic life—Parental, conjugal and filial love, no doubt is select and exclusive, yet its limitations are not in the passion, but in its objects. The love of the Republic, which is the love of our country upon the same general foundation of good will, expands with the extent of its object, and can embrace a whole continent with as much ease as a single city. But like all the social virtues it requires cultivation, and will not thrive upon ridicule and contempt.

Incorrect as this passage is with regard to principle, it is not more so than the fourth extract, in point of fact. What must be the opinion of respectable foreigners who shall read this terrible invective against our annual elections?—And what must be their surprise on being informed that it is merely a picture of the imagination—That it has no foundation in reality. If indeed a reader can discard the prepossession arising from the Author's name, there are in this extract some internal marks of inaccuracy. The accusation of *shameless profligacy* is in those

broad and general terms, which so often shelter a delusion. No specific example of this supposed profligacy is alleged. The remainder of the paragraph may be cited as a curious instance of Judgment extinguished in the blaze of Fancy. Our elections are held in the Spring. The *Spring* starts an idea of tillage : tillage leads the thoughts to Summer, and that gives the hint of an *Epidemic*. From that moment the accessorial images become the principal figures. The tillage turns up noxious weeds—The epidemic becomes a mortal pestilence—The *election* is entirely gone from the mind both of the writer and the reader—Nothing remains but the noxious weeds and the pestilence.

The two great vices, to which the experience of ancient and modern times, in other countries has shewn popular elections to be liable, are *bribery* and *violence*. I appeal now to the consciousness of every citizen of the Commonwealth. Are the instances of either, common in our Elections? I affirm with the most perfect confidence that they are extremely rare. There is sometimes an excess of zeal, and an enthusiasm of party spirit in favour of the respective candidates, and the newspapers on both sides are too accessible to scurrility and calumny against the persons whose names are held up for the suffrage of the voters. The general election is always a period of some agitation, and it stimulates and sharpens the anti-social passions of many individuals. But I have no fear of being contradicted when I say that our elections are remarkable for the purity, the mildness and the decorum with which they are conducted. It is inconceivable that a man acquainted with the Roman history, in the age of Cicero and Claudius should say as Mr. Ames does say, that “those times were not more corrupt than our own.”*

* The ‘deep corruption of those times’ is described by the Poet Lucan, not with metaphors about noxious weeds, and epidemic mischiefs; but with the specific characters of truth.

“Mensuraque juris

“Vis erat : hinc leges, et plebis scita coactae;

“Et cum Consulibus turbantes jura Tribuni;

“Hinc rapti precio fasces sectorque favoris

“Ipse sui populus; letalisque ambitus urbi,

“Annua venali referens certamina Campo.

But perhaps no one of these extracts deserves more seriously to be reflected upon than the fifth—Which so explicitly asserts that federalism, at the establishment of the Constitution, was *manifestly founded on a mistake*, in supposing the existence of virtue in the people.

It was observed in a former paper that the friends of Mr. Ames, who with such anxious industry have gathered all the gleanings of the newspapers of late years, for hasty crudities, which he never avowed, and who have abused the confidence of private correspondence, by publishing letters which on the face of them appear confidential, have at the same time *omitted* from this compilation one of the most eloquent speeches, which as a public man, as a Representative of the People, he ever made. The remark might have been much more extensive in its application. It applies to all his speeches in Congress from the establishment of the Government, until January 1794. In the first Congress objects of great and lasting importance were discussed. The administration was organized. The principles were settled, and the constitution itself was in some respects new modelled. We are told by the learned Biographer, and it is known to every man whose memory can trace so far back the progress of our history, that in all these discussions Mr. Ames took an active and conspicuous part.—Yet of all the speeches which he delivered on those occasions, the Compilers of this volume, have not thought one worthy of preservation, until they come to that upon Mr. MADISON'S Commercial Resolutions. Why all these omissions? and why this selection? —“The *why* is plain as way to parish church.” The

“Hence pliant, servile voices were *constrain'd*,
 “And force in popular assemblies reign'd.
 “Consuls and tribunes with opposing might
 “Join'd to confound and overturn the right:
 “Hence shameful magistrates were *made for gold*,
 “And a base people by themselves were sold:
 “Hence slaughter in the *venal* field returns,
 “And Rome her yearly competitions mourns.”

Rowe's *Lucan*.

Is it not a perversion of the essential nature of things, to draw political principles from such a state of society, as applicable to ours? Yet Mr Ames, after referring to some of the worst transactions of this very period in the Roman history, asks “Is not ALL THIS apparent in the United States?”

compilers hold that the federalism which founded the national constitution was *manifestly founded on a mistake*. They have renounced the principles of their better days, and withhold from the public every thing which could revive their influence or recall their recollection. This degeneracy from the honourable principles which they once maintained, is not a new phenomenon in the history of parties. In all free countries it is an event by no means uncommon, and it calls for the most watchful attention of the genuine patriot. It is by similar derelictions of their principles, that legitimate parties degenerate by degrees into intriguing factions and treasonable conspiracies.

After thus formally renouncing the original principles of federalism, what has *this sect* of American politicians substituted in their stead? The volume upon which I have already bestowed so much consideration, and which will yet require more, furnishes the answer.

The “Dangers of American Liberty” is a fable without a moral. It paints in the gloomy colours of a disturbed imagination the supposed evils of our condition; and labours with painful argumentation to prove that *none* of the remedies or alleviations which minds of healthier hue, had suggested, can have any efficacy to restore us to the enjoyment of freedom. It indicates no remedy as advisable to be tried.—What was the reason of this?

In a free country the first step of ambitious and disappointed *leaders*, whose only resource is in a revolution, must naturally be to make the people dissatisfied with their condition—To persuade them that their situation is intolerable—The next, to extinguish all their hopes of its amendment from the natural course of things, and existing institutions—The third is *Revolution*. Until the two first are accomplished, the instigators to the last, must often conceal, and sometimes disguise the means for its accomplishment.

A revolution, not in the administration, but of the constitution, was obviously the only remedy within the reach of human powers, upon the mind of Mr. Ames. Taking the facts and the principles exhibited in this treatise for true, and the duty of insurrection against such a

state of things follows as an irresistible inference ; but the time was not come when this might safely be committed to paper. It is now known that the project for a dismemberment of the Union, by a plan which required a *military commander*, had been very seriously proposed to Mr. Hamilton, shortly before his death. It had probably been known to Mr. Ames, though he said nothing of it in his eulogy of Hamilton. The paper drawn up by this gentleman, previous to his meeting with Col. Burr, manifestly alludes to that proposition, and to a state of things for which it was material to the public, that he should keep his military character unquestioned. He had disapproved and rejected the scheme of dismemberment, and Mr. Ames, in this work speaks of such an expectation, as one of those *flattering hopes*, which would not be realized. Possibly Mr. Ames was unwilling himself to look full in the face the expedients, which, on his statements, alone remained for the redemption of the country. The essay on a British alliance, the dangers of American liberty, and the review of a late pamphlet on the British constitution, all discover him entangled in the toils between his premises and his conclusions. Like the poetical image of Fear, he first lays a bewildered hand amid the chords, and then recoils, he knows not why,

“ E’en at the sound himself had made.”

The practical comment upon these principles is to be found, in the publication of these papers against the clear injunction of their author, and in the measures of the Massachusetts Legislature, precipitated by the men who believe in the same doctrines.

One of their first acts, on securing a majority in the legislature, was to manifest their hatred of popular elections, by taking a very important election from the people, to exercise it themselves ; to shew that federalism was founded on a mistake, they undertook to dictate (under the pretence of a request,) to the representatives of the people in Congress, how they should act, and when some of those representatives discovered, in a firm, though respectful manner, their sense of their own rights and obliga-

tions to the People, they replied, with insulting contumely. They have attempted, and but for the negative of the chief magistrate, would have authorized direct and forcible resistance against the laws of the Union. They have countenanced the grossest outrages committed against us by Great-Britain, and have not scrupled to call aloud upon Congress to go to war with France. They have openly avowed the intention of a partial association with some of the neighbouring states, and to manifest their *select* and *exclusive* love, they have fomented local jealousies, and instigated invidious animosities against our fellow-citizens in other parts of the union.

My countrymen ! the seeds and the fruits are both before you. If the extracts at the head of this paper are emphatically Republican, the leading measures of the Legislature have been emphatically patriotic. They flow from the same sources ; prostration to Britain, horror of France, and contempt for the American people.

NUMBER IV.

SUBSERVIENCY to Britain—Abhorrence of France—and contempt for the American people.—Such are the three foundation stones upon which the political system of Mr. Ames, in his last days was erected. This political system has become the predominating policy of the petty majority in the Legislature of this Commonwealth. It is upon this basis that their principal measures of the last year have arisen. It is believed that a large proportion of that small majority, have been reluctantly drawn into the current of this fatal *vortex*. It is hoped that an exposure of these principles in their naked deformity, a demonstration of their pernicious tendency to the peace and liberties of this nation, and a disclosure of the chain of connection between the doctrines of the volume, and the proceedings of the party, will not be without its use to the people of the Commonwealth and of the Union.

For this purpose some extracts from this publication

have been given in former papers. And as partial quotations of single sentences are not of themselves a sufficient foundation from which the principles of a writer can be inferred, a view has also been taken of the general character and tendency of those writings of Mr. Ames, which are now published for the first time. The anti-republican prejudices which originated in his excessive admiration of Britain, and his extreme contempt for our country, were exhibited in the survey taken in my last paper, of his projected work, which his editors have chosen to entitle "*The Dangers of American Liberty.*"

A natural consequence of the mean estimation in which he held the whole people of America, was the jealousy, and it is not too much to say rancor, with which he contemplated the people of those parts of the Union not in our own immediate neighbourhood. I propose in this paper to present a number of extracts from that same treatise, indicating the *temper* of his sentiments upon this subject, and to suggest some observations upon them, for the consideration of my readers.

1. "The progress of party has given to *Virginia* a preponderance, that perhaps was not foreseen. Certainly, since the late amendment in the article for the choice of President and Vice-President, there is no existing provision of any efficacy to counteract it." p. 385.

2. "If states were neither able nor inclined to obstruct the federal union, much indeed, might be hoped from such a confederation. But *Virginia*, *Pennsylvania*, and *New-York* are of an extent sufficient to form potent monarchies, and, of course, are too powerful, as well as too proud, to be subjects of the federal laws. Accordingly, one of the first schemes of amendment, and the most early executed, was to exempt them in form from the obligations of justice." p. 385.

3. "Here let Americans read their own history. Here let even *Virginia* learn, how perilous and how frail will be the consummation of her schemes." p. 387.

4. "The great state of *Virginia* has fomented a licentious spirit among her neighbours." p. 388.

5. "What shall we denominate the *oligarchy* that sways the authority of *Virginia*?" p. 399.

6. "*Virginia* has never been more federal than it was, when from considerations of policy, and, perhaps, in the hope of future success from its intrigues, it adopted the new constitution; for it has never desisted from obstructing its measures, and urging every scheme that would reduce it back again to the imbecility of the old confederation. To the dismay of every true patriot, these arts have at length fatally succeeded; and our system of government now differs very little from what it would have been, if the impost proposed by the old Congress had been granted, and the new federal constitution had never been adopted by the states."

7. "The straggling settlements of the *southern part of the Union*, which now is the governing part, have been formed by emigrants from almost every nation of Europe. Safe in their solitudes alike from the annoyance of enemies and of government, it is infinitely more probable, that they will *sink into barbarism* than rise to the dignity of national sentiment and character."

8. "Are not the wandering Tartars or Indian hunters at least as susceptible of patriotism as these stragglers in our western forests, and infinitely fonder of glory? It is difficult to conceive of a country, which, from the manner of its settlement, or the manifest tendencies of its politics, is more destitute or more incapable of being inspired with political virtue." p. 414.

In grouping together these sentiments, from a heart ulcerated against our fellow citizens beyond the borders of New England, I am performing a task still more ungracious than when collecting the most striking testimonials of the author's contempt for us all. If it be true, that the people in the different quarters of this Union are not sufficiently drawn together by the ties which form the connections of a common country—If it be true that they have in every great section certain varieties or supposed oppositions

of interest, and many passions and prejudices, which alienate them from each other, let me ask, what ought to be the principles, and the maxims, of a genuine American statesman?—Can there be any patriotism, can there be any wisdom, can there be any humanity, in a painful exertion of intellect, to awaken every sleeping ember of jealousy, to widen every breach of separation, to stiffen coldness into frost, to exasperate indifference into rancour? No, it is to aggravate the very evil of which we complain. Crimination and reproach are not the natural instruments of conciliation. Unjust reproach inevitably calls forth and deserves resentment; its natural offspring are hatred and revenge. I cannot waste words upon an argument to prove that the first of human blessings to this country is *Union*. I must take this for granted; and then I say, legislators of America! whether assembled in the halls of Congress, or in the Assemblies of the individual States; whether exercising the magistracy delegated by the people and your constitutions, or that natural magistracy, which among a free and virtuous people, is the prerogative of genius and virtue, delegated by heaven, and operating by the influence of your writings and examples; let it be your first study to draw together these elements which are too loosely associated—Promote a spirit of conciliation—soften asperities—cherish a good understanding with your neighbours—exhibit to them a confidence in their integrity—an accommodating disposition toward their interests—a cheerfulness in the support of common burthens; a candid acknowledgement of participation in common enjoyments—a good humour and benevolence, such as seldom fails among men with any degree of civilization to meet with a like return. Do not totally estrange from each other those whose common misfortune it is not to be closely enough allied. Do not make national enemies of those who are not sufficiently fellow citizens. Do not enkindle fraternal fury among those whose greatest want is a sufficient ardour of fraternal affection.

There is no real opposition of interests between any one part of this union and another. Nothing but disunion can create such an opposition; but that would create

it; and in its train an endless perspective of unextinguishable war. Union is peace; and peace is liberty. Dismemberment would from its origin breed war and despotism at a single birth.

When Burr and Blannerhasset were attempting a project of disunion, to be effected by a division of the Western States, they circulated, in conversations and newspapers, the same excitements among them to jealousy and envy against their Atlantic sisters, as we find in these extracts against the stragglers of the forests. They urged that the western people were oppressed by the commercial states; that we had made them our tributaries; that they had paid a heavy load of taxes for our benefit; that the produce of *their* lands was applied to pay our debts; that the national government was *without energy*, and that from all this must follow within five, or even two years, *the dissolution of the Union*. This language was as plausible, and not more delusive than that held forth to *our* selfish passions, in the “Dangers of American Liberty.” By a partial and insidious representation of things, nothing can be more easy than to paint any one part of the Union, as under oppression from the rest—A just representation, which draws a candid balance of advantages and inconveniences, must prove alike to every part, that the anchor of their salvation is union; that the last hopes of improvement in the condition of man, would perish for ever in our division.

Mr. Ames, to the last hour of his life, appears to have taken a pride in considering himself as a disciple of the Washington school of American politics. I will not repeat here the words of that great man, in which he cautions his countrymen against all such addresses to their local prejudices and reciprocal jealousies.—They have been so recently and so often repeated in the public prints, that they must be upon the memory, as I would they were in the hearts of all my readers. Between these sentiments and those of the “Dangers of American Liberty,” the contrast is too striking not to be perceived by every person who will compare them—But in renouncing the political principles of Washington, Mr. Ames could not help renouncing his own. These scornful and contemp-

tuous strictures upon the inhabitants of the Western States, how poor and unamiable do they appear, when compared with those beautiful passages in the speech upon the treaty of 1794, where he urges the situation, and the interests of those very western people, as arguments for the appropriations required by that instrument. These passages compose perhaps the finest specimen of American eloquence that ever was pronounced. And in what does their superior excellence exist? In what, but that ardent fellow-feeling, that blaze of *patriotism*, that keen and vivid participation in their dangers, and that earnestness of zeal for their safety, which the speaker professed, and which at that time I have no doubt he really felt?

It is in the nature of confederated republics, that every member of the association should endeavour to raise as high as possible its own weight and influence over the whole. It would be absurd to complain of this disposition, because it is inherent in the nature of men. All associations of such a political character ought to be calculated upon it, and constituted in such a manner as to control its operations.—Their mechanism should be such as to allow each member of the society, its due and proportional weight; and at the same time to check in every one, by the common interest and effort of the rest that sort of ascendancy, which might tend to make one part subservient to the other. The progress of party has perhaps contributed in some degree to increase the preponderance of Virginia, in the counsels of our union; but a man must have taken a very partial view of our late history, not to perceive that the concurrence of party politics with Virginian policy, is accidental and temporary; that it cannot long continue, and that there is every prospect that those engines, instead of operating in concert, will soon be in opposition to each other. It is not party, but the present *Constitution*, which has given a solid and permanent increase to the influence of Virginia; and if this was not foreseen when the constitution was adopted, it was because consequences which after the event are found to have been inevitable, and extremely obvious, are often not anticipated, by the foresight of the profoundest statesmen. Under the old

confederation, every state had the same power in the administration of the national affairs. Under the present constitution, a popular representation was introduced, and the most powerful branch of the Legislature, was so composed, as to give the greatest influence to the state of the largest population. I see nothing in this which ought to affect or alarm an American patriot ; nor can I subscribe at all to the opinion that the ascendancy of Virginia has become uncontrollable.

It is also a great error to reason upon the hypothesis that the *State* of Virginia as such has a steady, uniform, premeditated system of policy, hostile to the general government, which she constantly pursues under all the changes of her own administration. Mr. Ames gives as little quarter to Virginia *federalism*, as to Virginia oligarchy. He would have us believe that she adopted the constitution, only from considerations of policy, and in the hope of success to her intrigues. This is the very wormwood of local jealousy. The federalism of Virginia, had at that day the same obstacles to encounter as the federalism of Massachusetts. Its objects of pursuit were the same, and it succeeded by a victory as hardly contested, and by a majority of about the same proportion. The first president of the United States was a native of Virginia ; but it is not intimated that during his administration of eight years, the state of Virginia had an undue ascendancy in the government of the nation. On the contrary, Mr. Ames's great complaint is that she was constantly thwarting and counteracting it. At length he says she fatally succeeded in reducing it to the imbecility of the old confederation.

I shall not undertake the task of vindicating the policy of Virginia, while the government of the state was in opposition to the general government. It resembled too much that of the present rulers of Massachusetts, to harmonize with my ideas of correct constitutional principles. But reflect upon the transactions of the Jefferson administration. Reflect especially upon the transactions of the two last years. The part of perplexing, of obstructing, of counteracting the measures of the general government has not been performed by Virginia. She has no otherwise

interfered in the affairs of the nation than to pledge herself in the most solemn manner, to support the national authorities, at a most perilous crisis of our affairs. The "*select*" and "*exclusive*" friends of Mr. Ames, have exchanged weapons with Virginia. But Virginia in the most virulent extreme of her opposition never joined the banners of a foreign enemy to strike the standard of the union.

The state policy of Virginia, like that of Massachusetts and of every other State in the union, fluctuates according to the issue of her annual elections. In the great *party* division which has pervaded the whole union, and which existed long before the federal constitution, Virginia, like all her sisters, was divided against herself. One effect of the constitution was to new organize these two parties, and give each of them a rallying point in the person of one individual. The individual *on both sides*, was a native of Virginia. WASHINGTON was the leader of the federalists. JEFFERSON, of the republicans. The Virginia representation in Congress was always partly federal and partly republican. At the second presidential election, the vote of Virginia, like that of the other states, was unanimous for Washington. To this day, the Chief Justice of the United States, and another Judge of the Supreme Court, are natives of Virginia, and federalists. Both of them, as well as the present President of the United States, were among the active supporters of the federal constitution, and members of the Virginia State Convention which adopted it. In the election which has just taken place, four federalists at least, and two or three others, as far from the political system of the President, as federalism itself, have been chosen members of the House of Representatives. Shall we be told that all this signifies nothing. That they are all *Oligarchs*. And that all these *federalists* of Virginia, are moved only by considerations of policy, "and the hope of future success from their intrigues." Such is Mr. Ames's argument.—Such is the standing doctrine of his select and exclusive friends. But of all this may be truly predicated, what Mr. Ames says of federalism—It is all "founded upon a mistake."

The same distortion of objects from their real character is apparent in the second extract above quoted. The amendment of the Constitutions which exempted the States from *suability* by individuals, in the courts of the Union, is represented as having been effected by the great States of *Virginia, Pennsylvania* and *New-York*—and as having exempted them in form from *the obligations of Justice*.

Why was the odium of a measure presented under such an invidious description confined to *Virginia, Pennsylvania* and *New-York*? Why was not *Massachusetts* included in the number? Had Mr. Ames forgotten that this very amendment was introduced into the Senate of the United States by Mr. George Cabot then a Senator from the state of *Massachusetts*?—Why was the measure itself presented in such an invidious light? Had Mr. Ames forgotten that as a member of the house of Representatives in Congress he had voted for this very amendment himself? If he considered it as a scheme to exempt States from the *obligation of Justice*, he stands self-condemned upon a charge of no trivial culpability. A charge, of which I do not believe him to have been guilty. It is not his vote in Congress in 1794, but his representation in 1805, of the measure for which he had given that vote, which discloses the partial and the prejudiced mind. That amendment of the constitution, was called for by the general sense of the people throughout the union; its object was not to exempt the states from the *obligations of Justice*, but from being made parties at the suit of individuals, before the courts of the United States. The conclusion to which the argument leads is that a confederation like that of the United States is impracticable, because the powerful members will not submit to the laws of the whole body. This opinion is not new; but our experience hitherto has not shewn its accuracy. It is the most sacred duty of the American people, to continue the proof that a confederated republic of many mighty members is a practicable expedient of human association—and it follows as a duty no less incumbent upon their statesmen and sages, to inculcate such

principles and such sentiments, as have a natural tendency to give duration and stability to their Union.

The reflections in the two last of these extracts upon the southern and western sections of the Union, are not only flagrant examples of that spirit against which we were so earnestly admonished by the paternal voice of WASHINGTON; they are as unfounded as they are unfriendly. American patriotism, contemplates with very different sensations the rapid progress of these settlements. The active enterprize and hardihood of character which distinguishes many of the settlers; the rapidity with which population, cultivation, and social enjoyments are constantly multiplying, with wealth and art, and science in their train. To compare our fellow-citizens of the southern and western states, with wandering Tartars or Indian Hunters, to utter seriously the opinion that they will probably *sink into barbarism*, is a demonstration of the most deplorable blindness to the true state of things. Great numbers of the settlers both in the south and west, are emigrants from New-England. They are literally our children and our brethren. United to us not only by the ties of civil society, but by those of kindred and consanguinity. Were one of their distinguished orators, (and orators they have with whom Mr. Ames himself would not have been disgraced by being compared) to affirm that the inhabitants of the atlantic states were sinking fast into piracy and barbarism; that they had no more patriotism than Algerines, and were not half so fond of glory; the picture would not be more unkind, nor more unlike than that against which I am here excepting.

I except against it the more earnestly, because it is one of the most pernicious and fatal errors for the people of any one part of this union to admit into their minds such sentiments against the rest—because, not only the publication of this volume but a multitude of news-paper essays, party resolutions, and incendiary pamphlets, within the last year have shewn a systematic attempt to disseminate among the people of New-England this groundless jealousy and hatred of the southern and western people. Above all, because the poison of this same jealousy, and

hatred has been circulated in a late address of the Legislature of Massachusetts to the people of the state. It is time to say and to prove that all these insidious instigations against our own countrymen, are *founded on mistake*. They expose us to the merited contempt and scorn of those who are thus slandered, and their most inevitable tendency is to excite and provoke that hostility which they proclaim. Prejudices and partialities exist in every part of the union; but to the disgrace of New-England her portion is the first where men distinguished as Mr. Ames, and even legislative papers have given countenance and credit to these fictions of ignorance affecting to be wise, and these phantoms of vulgar fear, affecting to be provident. The legislative address indeed, after its hour of authority has gone by, will be numbered with the dead. Its patriotic glories are already withering upon the stalk. But the eloquence of Ames is destined to longer life. His genius will still be admired, when its fallacious colours will be detected at a glance, and lamented as the fading yellow of a jaundiced eye. Had his friends valued his reputation; had they been capable of discarding, for a moment, the contracted and sordid passions of a *caucusing committee*, they might have compiled from his writings and speeches a real monument of unfulfilled fame. As it is, they have exhibited him, as the herald of party *slander*, and the dupe of British imposition. Instead of rising with him to hold commerce with the skies, they have sunk him to a level with themselves.

NUMBER V.

“ Ah Fear ! ah frantic Fear !

“ I see, I see thee near.

COLLINS.

“ LET us assert a genuine independence of spirit :
 “ we shall be false to our duty and feelings as Americans,
 “ if we basely descend to a servile dependence on France
 “ or Great Britain.”

p. 57.

Such was the language of Mr. Ames on the 27th January, 1794, and with this just and honourable sentiment he closed his speech against Mr. Madison's resolutions. To this sentiment I now adhere, and in these papers am endeavouring to defend it against the goblin terrors of Mr. Ames himself, and the more deliberate alarms of his publishing friends.

The object of these terrors, was compounded of two ingredients, which in 1794 had at least an appearance of congeniality and co operation. French power and democracy. The alliance between these two tremendous monsters was surely dissolved long before Mr. Ames portrayed with such poetic powers the dangers of American liberty. But although for ever separated on the scene of real life, they were still united in dreadful harmony in the world of imaginary fear, and they tortured his fancy, with all their horrid shapes and sights unholy, as the images of the nightmare pass in confused succession before the waking slumbers of disease.

The degree to which his understanding was affected by these horrible visions can be described only by himself. In the "dangers of American liberty," after bitterly complaining that even among the federalists there were perhaps not five hundred who allowed themselves "to view the progress of licentiousness as so *speedy*, so *sure*, and so *fatal* as the deplorable experience of our country shews *it is*, and the evidence of history and the constitution of human nature demonstrate that it *must be*." He apologizes for this federal apathy by the following picture of his own sensations.

"Our days are made heavy with the pressure of anxiety, and our nights restless with visions of horror: We listen to the clank of chains, and overhear the whispers of assassins. We mark the barbarous dissonance of mingled rage and triumph in the yell of an infatuated mob; we see the dismal glare of their burnings and scent the loathsome steam of human victims offered in sacrifice."

A man must have no ordinary share of malice in his composition, who could wish to see his direst foe, in the state of mind indicated by this paragraph. But this was not the worst. There is a species of alienation in the intellect, for which the miseries of a temporal life are not sufficiently distressing. Melancholy derangement often terminates in the belief of the unhappy patient that he is actually suffering the torments of eternity. The frequency with which the idea of Hell returns in the latter compositions of this volume, connected with French conquest and democratic triumph affords too strong presumption that the natural tendency of the author's distemper was to that issue.

“It (Democracy) is an illuminated Hell that in the midst of remorse, horror and torture, rings with festivity; for experience shows, that one joy remains to this most malignant description of the damned, the power to make others wretched.”

p. 432.

By comparing this paragraph with one written some years earlier, we shall perceive that *one Hell*, was as inadequate to the immensity of Mr. Ames' fears, as one world was to that of Alexander's ambition. There was the “Hell” France, and the “Hell” Democracy.

“Behold France, that open Hell, still ringing with agonies and blasphemies, still smoking with sufferings and crimes, in which we see their state of torment, and *perhaps* our future state.”

Laocoon p. 97.

This was written in 1799, when there remained in the writer's mind some hopes that we might possibly escape these infernal regions. But in 1805, these hopes were all extinguished, and to Hell we must go. For immediately after the passage which pronounces Democracy to be Hell, comes a description of the French Revolution in the author's most glowing manner, and which he closes by saying, “I have written the history of France. Can we look back upon it without terror, or forward without despair?”

When I consider the state of health in which these things were written, I cannot but feel a sentiment of compassion for the sufferings of the author, which checks the disposition, almost irresistible to present them in the ludicrous light which would be most appropriate to them.

The same indulgence, however, is by no means necessary for the editors who have published these political spasms to the world for political wisdom. When Mr. Ames shrieks out,

“Look, look, fellow-countrymen, as we do, to your dear, innocent children. Ask your hearts, if they can bear so racking a question, whether a shallow confidence in our unarmed security against Bonaparte, in case Great Britain should fall, does not tend to devote them to the rage of a restless, unappeasable tyrant. We tremble at the thought that our own *dear children* will be in Bonaparte’s conscription for St. Domingo, in case the Gallian policy of our government should be pursued, till its natural tendencies are accomplished,” We remember that these were among the last flutterings of a nervous system in ruins. But when upon this passage we find a note at the bottom of the page, informing the reader that Mr. Ames “could scarcely speak of his children, *during the last few months of his life*, without expressing his deep apprehensions of their future servitude to the French,” We ask whether the annotator means it as a sarcasm upon the passage, or a recommendation of the sentiment it contains?

We are told by the biographical eulogist that Mr. Ames had read Virgil, in the original, within two years of his death with increased delight. How much is it to be lamented that the admirable mixture of philosophy and of poetry in the Georgicks had not produced the effect of composing his mind to some portion of tranquillity.

*Felix, qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas :
Atque metus omnis et inexorabile fatum
Subiecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari !*

*Illum non populi fascēs, non purpura regum
Flexit, et invidos agitans distordia fratres ;
Aut conjurato descendens Dacus ab Histrop :
Non res Romanæ perituraque regna,*

The sense of this passage, so apposite to the direful lamentations of Mr. Ames, may be rendered more accurately by a paraphrase than by any existing translation—the following will convey the substance of the ideas :

How blest the man, whose philosophic mind
 The *real causes* of events can find !
 Who spurns base fear, defies the bolt of chance,
Nor raves of Hell, Democracy and France.
 Not royal robes, not faction's fearful name,
 Not yearly suffrage shall convulse his frame.
 His dreams no shape of Bonaparte scares,
 His children's limbs no phantom Frenchman tears.
 Unmov'd he views the tyrant's transient sway,
 And smiles at iron crowns and *empires of a day.*

This, however, was not the good fortune of Mr. Ames. The extracts in this paper, are but a few, out of many, which, from an attentive perusal might be collected, and which indicate the state of his mind, when they were written. It was a proverbial expression among the ancients, that “fear was a bad counsellor,” and certainly so it proved to Mr. Ames. For it totally broke down that “genuine independence of spirit,” which in his speech against Mr. Madison's resolutions in 1794, he had called upon us to assert.

It was this fear, which, mingling with the contempt he felt for his own countrymen, drove his imagination to the British navy, as the only hope of salvation to mankind from the Tartarus of France and democracy. In fixing the attention of the reader on these particular passages, to which I shall confine this paper, I wish him to indulge me with a few remarks, which I shall make as short as possible, and leave them to his own meditations.

First—Excessive terror is a sentiment as unworthy of a great statesman, as it is unbecoming in a man. As a basis for a political system, it is utterly incompatible with any pretension to independence.

Secondly—A man may perhaps be allowed to *fear*, more for his children than for himself ; but he ought to bring them up in the fear of nothing but of God. To teach pusillanimity by rule, is to make your children dastards, if they were not born such. In Corneille's tragedy of the Horatii, when the messenger informs the father that two of

his sons had been killed and the third had *fled*, he breaks out, not into lamentations over the dead, but into indignation against the fugitive survivor; and when asked what he would have had him *do*, one against three, his answer is—"he should *have died*." This is the sublime of sentiment. The contrast in the extract from Mr. Ames may serve as a sample of the anti-sublime.

American parents! instead of asking your hearts, whether your children are to be rescued from Bonaparte's conscription by *the British Navy*, teach your children, if it should be necessary, *to die* for their country. Take your lesson of parental affection as well as of patriotic virtue, from Corneille's Roman, and not from the faithless friends, who have divulged the weakness of Mr. Ames's last hours.

NUMBER VI.

IN my last paper, I presented several extracts, demonstrating the revolution which had been effected in the mind of Mr. Ames, between the year 1794, when his sound head and honest heart disdained a servile dependence either upon Britain or France, and the despairing period of 1808, when the British navy was his only hope of redemption from the Hells of France and democracy. It might perhaps be an entertaining, and not altogether an uninformative inquiry, by what process and by means of what agency this revolution was accomplished—But this is not necessary to my present purpose.

The opinion that nothing but the British navy can save us from the dominion of Bonaparte, is one of the thirty-nine articles of the select and exclusive church—And as, in comparison with it, transubstantiation is a rational and intelligible doctrine, it was necessary to mark the gradations of fear and horror, of France, and the transitions from patriotic affection to unutterable contempt for our own country, which preceded the intrusion of this glaring absurdity, into a mind so capacious of better things, as that of Mr. Ames.

I compare it to transubstantiation, because it contains within itself an inconsistency ; the mere statement of the position is its refutation—American *Independence, dependent* upon a British navy !—Nor is the inconsistency in the word only—It is rooted in the thing. The independence of a nation must rest upon its own energies, and you might as well talk of the liberties of an African slave, as of the freedom of 'one nation supported by nothing but the power of another.

It is in its nature a principle of servile dependence—And if the fact were so—if the people of this nation were so utterly debased beneath the name and character of manhood as Mr. Ames has declared them to be ; if “ we are of all men on earth the fittest to be slaves,” of what consequence is it whether we are the slaves of French or British masters ?

Quid refert mea
Cui serviam, clitellas dum portem meas ?

If the people of this Union were reduced to that deplorable condition of having only to deliberate “ whose base herd they would be”—still it would be incumbent upon those who prefer the domination of Britain to that of France, to shew that the British yoke would be the easiest—that the protection of the British navy would be a safe reliance—that by redemption from the Hell of France, we should have a *Paradise regained* in Britain. Upon this subject let us look at what has been passing in the world, from the commencement of the French revolution. Within the last fifteen years there is not a nation in Europe, excepting France and Denmark, but has had the promise of British protection, and the curse of a British alliance—not one of them but has been plunged by it into the jaws of perdition. And, what ought not to have escaped the attention of an American statesman, it has in the result made them all dependent upon *France*. The uniform course has been this : Britain first instigates them to unfurl their banners against her enemy ; forms her alliance with them ; makes them fight her battles ; sacrifices them to her own projects of naval dominion or for-

eign conquest, and ends by abandoning them to the mercy of an exasperated and victorious foe. When she has thus made them the helpless victims of her own treachery, and of France's resentment, she seldom fails to turn against them her own thunders, and like the Prince of Darkness, becomes the final tormentor of those whom she first seduced. This is the process through which the Spanish patriots are passing at this hour. It is the course through which Sweden is passing. It is the course through which the people of this Union would beyond all question now be passing, if the government of the nation had been in the hands of the political sect who believe in these doctrines.

If our nominal independence of France rested upon no other foundation of power than the navy of England, the consequence would be that we should again be under the domination of England. Her argument would be that in all reason we ought to contribute our share to support the expense of protecting us, and we should soon be called upon for our contribution of men, as well as of money. This is not speculative anticipation—in fact both these pretensions have been advanced. The tribute claimed, and in one instance levied, under the orders in council, was an undisguised attempt to renew the project of taxation upon America, which severed this continent from the British empire. The king's proclamation of October, 1807 was an open authorization and command to his naval officers to impress *his subjects*, from American merchant vessels—and of the question who was or was not his subject, the man-stealer himself was to be the only judge. With these two principles once established by our admission or acquiescence, no treaty of surrender, no articles of capitulation would be necessary to give to Great Britain an arbitrary control over the persons and property of Americans, for contribution to support her wars. Our blood and treasure would both be at her disposal—more rigorous than Nahash the Ammonite with the men of Jabesh-Gilead, the token by which alone she would make a covenant with us was, that we should first let her thrust out *both our eyes*.

American independence must rest upon the foundation of American valor and American patriotism.—Such is the eternal law of God and of nature. If the generous purpose of republican virtue is extinguished in the sordid selfishness of avarice; if the fathers who suffered unflinching the conflagrations of Charlestown and Falmouth, of Fairfield and New-London, of Esopus and Norfolk, who shed their blood in battle, and endured the lingering martyrdom of prison-ships and dungeons for the liberties of their country: if these fathers have begotten sons so degenerate as not to “reluct at the name and condition of Helots,” to fight for the protection of the British navy is to hang the load of Atlas upon the thread of a spider’s web. What is the British navy? Wood—and hemp—and iron—and what are these without the nerve of the British arm, and the fire of the British heart? Inert, passive, obedient *matter*. That arm and heart belong to Britain, and not to us. Enough have they to do to protect and defend their own island. But is the American sinew more flaccid, is the American heart less ardent than those of Britons? Alas! it was the misery of Mr. Ames’s malady, so to believe; it is the folly of his pretended friends so to publish! In him it was lamentable error—In them it is the most inexcusable of calumnies, the calumny of their own countrymen.

No, we are not that herd of servile usurers, that den of dastardly jackalls which we are thus represented to be. We have no ambitious wish for war, no passion for foreign conquest; and of course no shallow love of needless armies and navies. Our very love of liberty fortifies, and perhaps carries to excess our jealousies of these double-edged weapons, which might be brandished *inward* against ourselves as well as outward against our foreign foes.—But the unconquerable will which carried us through all the trials of the revolutionary war remains unimpaired, and when called into action by the unequivocal voice of the country, shines with undiminished lustre. The names of Truxton, Little, and Preble, are as glorious to our republic as those of the naval heroes of the revolution, and the annals of Roman history cannot furnish a fairer page

than that to which the heroic devotion of Wadsworth, Somers, Israel and Decatur is entitled. These are the models of American character in the *present* age; and if the examples which they have exhibited to their countrymen are rare, it is only because by the blessing of God the occasions to call them forth have been few.

Some of the extracts in my last paper were selected from an elaborate attempt to prove that in this country there is not, and cannot, in the nature of things, be any such thing as patriotism. The whole passage is too long for selection; but may be found in the volume, from the middle of page 412 to the close of page 414. I shall not here press the subject any farther. I shall forbear to shew, as with the greatest ease might be done, that both in point of argument and of fact, it is but the "baseless fabric of a vision"—But to exhibit the *comparative* state of *affections* in which Great Britain and America stand in the hearts of those who furnished the *raw material* of the author's lucubrations, I request the unbiassed reader to reflect upon the following passage.

"Great Britain, by being an island, is secured from foreign conquest; and by having a powerful enemy within sight of her shore, is kept in sufficient *dread of it* to be inspired with *patriotism*. That virtue, with all the fervour and elevation that a society which mixes so much of the commercial with the martial spirit can display, has other kindred virtues in its train; and these have had an influence in forming the habits and principles of action, not only of the English military and nobles, but of the mass of the nation. There is much, therefore, there is every thing IN THAT ISLAND to blend self-love with love of country. It is impossible, that an Englishman should have *fears* for the government without trembling for his own safety. *How different are these sentiments from the immovable apathy of those citizens, who think a constitution no better than any other piece of paper, nor so good as a blank on which a more perfect one could be written.*" p. 427.

Let it be remarked that Mr. Ames in this place, and in the other to which I have referred the reader, appears

to consider *fear* as exclusively the primary foundation of *patriotism*; and every other source from which this virtue may be supposed to derive, he seems to consider as merely a theme of hypocritical declamation. I will not recur to any supposition of benevolence, independent of selfish motives, as existing in the heart of man; from which some portion of patriotic feeling might originate. But surely fear is not the *only* principle of social attraction. The sense of common *rights*, of common *enjoyments*, of common *moral* and *political principles*, of congenial habits, manners, sentiments and even prejudices, the instinct of attachment to *our native land*,* the love of fame, which, though an individual passion, identifies itself so naturally with the love of our country, *ambition*, which an accurate and close observer, will find burning in the American breast more fiercely than that avarice, which strikes the superficial eye; the obligation of social *duty*, which Mr.

* I am aware that this is one of the feelings which cold metaphysics will disclaim or deride; and which Mr. Ames would not allow as a source of patriotism. But upon questions of feeling we may appeal from abstraction to poetry. This sentiment of attachment to the land of our nativity is painted with some of the most exquisite touches of nature in Wieland's *Oberon*.—The hero of the poem and his squire Sherasmin, are riding along the banks of Euphrates, in silence, and the thoughts of each of them are represented as dwelling on the distant objects of their delight.

While in imaginary joy, the knight
Clasps to his breast, the bride, thus dearly won,
Steals unawares the old man's raptur'd sight
Forth from Euphrates to his dear Garonne,
Where first his childhood cull'd the flower's delight—
“No—thinks he—nowhere does God's blessed Sun
So mildly shine as where by me first seen—
No meadow blooms so gay—so fresh no other green.

Thou little spot, where light first on me shone,
Where my first pang, my earliest joy I knew,
What though remote, unnotic'd and unknown,
Yet shall my heart, to thee for ever true,
Still drawn by secret ties to thee alone,
E'en Paradise as exile from thee view:
Oh! prove but true at least my boding mind—
O lay me in thy lap, amid my sires reclin'd.”

Oberon, Book 4, st. 21, 22. The last line
is from *Sotbeby's translation*.

Deny, or sneer at these sentiments, who will—they will find an echo in every honest heart, and true philosophy will recognize in them *some* of the most powerful impulses to patriotism.

Ames certainly supposed himself to feel, and which therefore in candour he ought to admit as one impulse of action in others, all these are sources of patriotism, far more copious, as well as far more noble, than his miserable *dread of being conquered*.

But it is the contrast of feeling in the heart of the writer, (or rather of his instigators) between Great Britain and America, manifested in this and many other places, which demands the unqualified reprobation of every virtuous American. It is the preference of a foreign country to his own, so undisguised, so glaring, and resting upon such false foundations, upon which I call the eye of the nation; not for the paltry purpose of affecting his reputation, but to put the country upon their guard against the machinations and intrigues of the men whose politics are governed by the same narrow views and the same vicious passions. I have given this extract as a specimen, but there is scarcely a page after the first hundred in this volume, but bears the marks of the same sentiment—scarcely a page but proves that with the idea of Great Britain, every associated idea, was esteem, love, veneration, idolatry—while every thought associated with that of America was bitterness and rancour, mingling with disgust and scorn.

I might multiply the proofs of these anti-patriotic prejudices, until this review should swell beyond the size of the volume itself. But something must be left to the judgment and understanding of the reader. I shall therefore only present the following passages in final proof of the positions I have advanced, and if they leave incredulity itself unconvinced, only ask him who desires more accumulation of evidence to the same point, to read the book.

“In that *enslaved* country (Britain) every executive attempt at usurpation has been spiritedly and perseveringly resisted, and substantial improvements have been made in the constitutional provisions for liberty. Witness the habeas corpus, the independence of the judges, and the *perfection, if any thing human is perfect*, of their administration of justice, the result of the famous Middlesex election, and that on the right of issuing general search warrants.

Let every citizen who is able to think, and who can bear the pain of thinking, MAKE THE CONTRAST AT HIS LEISURE.

p. 429.

“For our part we deem her (Britain’s) grandeur intrinsic, the fair fruit of her constitution, her justice, her arts, and her magnanimity.

p. 376.

“The world’s master allows no neutrality. In fact there are no neutrals. The maritime law supposes a society of nations bound together by reciprocal rights and duties. That society is dissolved; *and it is chimerical, if not unwarrantable* for the United States to claim singly the aggregated and supposed residuary rights devolved upon us by the departed nations. The old system is gone; *and it is a mockery, or worse*, for one nation to affect to represent a dozen once independent states, now swallowed up by a conqueror. Ambition will violate *our moonshine rights*; and if we submit to his decrees, we ourselves violate our neutral duties. What tyranny will do in contempt of right, self preservation permits the other belligerent to do in strict conformity with it. Where, then, is neutrality? LET US BE ASHAMED OF A PETULENT STRIFE ABOUT LOST AND IRRECOVERABLE PRETENSIONS.”

p. 377.

Gracious Heaven! is this the language of an American?—Of a New-England man? And is this the patriotism which animated the last year’s Legislature of Massachusetts? Yes—these are the principles upon which the supreme authority of the state called with such importunate outcry upon the government of the Union to unfurl the republican banners against the imperial standard.—These are the doctrines which in 1809, are published in the metropolis of Massachusetts—for PATRIOTISM!



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